

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LA PAZ 03573 221951Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6744

INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BDIS, ENRG, BL

SUBJ: PUBLIC DEBATE ON GULF

1. PRESS GAVE LESS ATTENTION TO GULF MAY 22.

2. ASIDE FROM PLAY ON CARLOS DORADO'S COURT APPEARANCE, MOST SIGNIFICANT STORIES WERE CALLS FROM LEFT SIDE OF BOLIVIAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM FOR CUT OFF GULF INDEMNIZATION. PRESENCIA REPORTED MINE WORKERS PRESS RELEASE DEMANDING SUSPENSION OF PAYMENTS TO "IMPERIALIST" CORPORATION GULF AS ONLY WAY TO RIGHT CORRUPTION. FORMER PRESIDENT HERNAN SILES SENT PRESENCIA NOTE FROM CHILE SUGGESTING END TO PAYMENTS SINCE WHEN PRESIDENT HE HAD WARNED OIL COMPANIES OF CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE TO RESPECT BOLIVIAN SOVEREIGNTY. HE ALSO GOT IN DIG AT GOB BY SUGGESTING THOROUGH INVESTIGATION OF CORRUPTION INCLUDING ILLICIT DRUG TRADE. NATIONAL PROFESSIONALS' ASSOCIATION CALLED FOR SUSPENSION OF INDEMNITY TO GULF WHICH HAS "INSTITUTIONALIZED BRIBERY" IN BOLIVIA. IT ALSO SAID GOB SHOULD CONSIDER "CONSTITUTIONALIZING" GOVERNMENT SO LEGISLATURE CAN CHECK ON EXECUTIVE'S ACTS.

3. PRESENCIA ALSO REPORTED CONCERN OF UNNAMED OFFICIAL PRIVATE ENTERPRISE CONFEDERATION THAT GULF CASE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT ONGOING NEGOTIATIONS TO OBTAIN CREDIT FOR NEW PROJECTS. THE CONFEDERATION IS SETTING UP GROUP TO STUDY GULF ISSUE.

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4. MORE CONSERVATIVE EL DIARIO EXPRESSED "INDIGNATION" IN CENTER PAGE INSET AT TREATMENT BEING ACCORDED GULF REP CARLOS DORADO. DIARIO RECALLED DORADO'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER INCLUDING SERVICE IN CHACO WAR AND AS JOURNALIST FOR DIARIO. IT CONCLUDED THAT JUDGES' DECISIONS SO FAR HAVE BEEN UNJUST.

5. HOY CALLED ON GOB AND STATE PETROLEUM COMPANY YPFB TO TAKE PRECAUTION OF CHECKING ON OWNERSHIP OF INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM COMPANIES NOW EXPLORING IN BOLIVIA TO ASSURE THAT NONE ARE OWNED IN PART BY GULF.

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